

Request for Assistance

Program: Synthesizer Workshop-Performance Series
Contact: Walter Wright

Proposal: To design and conduct a series of workshop-performances introducing 1/2" video processing machines such as the Paik-Abe.

In attempting to meet the demand for numerous requests for introductory demonstrations of the Paik-Abe, the Center has found that neither a workshop nor performance situation alone is sufficient as an introduction to the Paik-Abe Synthesizer. The proposed series consists of the integration of the concepts of both within one presentation, the initial performance gradually evolving into a workshop. The performance section consists of the playing of one or more prerecorded tapes, at least one black and white, through the rescan. Tapes can then be put through the color channel of the synthesizer with other live cameras stationary at this point. The aim of the performance section is the demonstration of a controlled use of the Synthesizer as an instrument. It is essential that the audience be introduced to synthesized imagery and see its controlled use within the development of an intentional structure to produce a visual score. The performance section produces a realization that the machine does not generate random images and that the visual effects are controllable. Cameras are gradually removed from stationary positions, and the audience is encouraged to work directly with the machine, first through the cameras and then through the control panel. The performance is necessary in order that people realize that control over imagery is possible, gaining confidence in their own ability to approach the machine directly. Emphasis throughout the presentation is on what the Paik-Abe does, the visual vocabulary, and how the images can be structured to produce visual statements. Technical aspects of the machine are not discussed in detail; within the introductory framework of the series, it is felt that simple descriptions of the console, the development of basic concepts - continuity, how to return to a basic image or series of images, how to produce specific kinds of images, - how the colors work - are the factors necessary to facilitate people's use of the machine while minimizing confusion. Again, the emphasis is on the use of the machine with the possibility of controlled use firmly in the minds of the participants. The actual use of the machine by the people need not be controlled at this point; the realization that control is possible is more important initially than a demonstration of technical proficiency. Further information about technical aspects of the machine or extended use are handled by directing people to the Center.

This series is necessary for the purpose of exposing people to the capabilities of image processing machines, to encourage a form of engagement with them, to develop an increased receptivity to uses of video beyond broadcast and to indicate the possibilities for further exploration at the Center. The presentations could be directed toward interested galleries, museums, universities and conferences such as the New York State Art Teachers Association Convention attended by the Center. The series would include about one program per month, advertised through a brochure.

For budget information see attachment to page 9 A-4

Request for Assistance

Program: Operating Expenses 1974: Experimental Television Center Ltd.
Contact: Ralph Hocking or Sherry Miller

Since June 1973 the Center has been pursuing with more concentration an area which the Center has always supported, video art. The free equipment access program run by the Center for any interested individual or group in the community was very successful in terms of the numbers of people involved, the interest and demand for 1/2" equipment and the rethinking of basic concepts of television. Although the Center was supported philosophically during the course of the program, we had little success in obtaining local financial support or in interesting another not-for-profit community group to assume responsibility for the program while retaining the original conceptual basis which is, we feel, a major reason for the success of the program. As an experimental center we further believe that the community program was evolving into an on-going service which should be community supported. We have established that an equipment access program can be thought provoking, interesting, successful and necessary to the community.

We have shifted our emphasis now to video art with more structured programs designed for community and state-wide groups who are interested in 1/2" video. We are now offering to any interested group workshops held at the Center or outside dealing with: 1. equipment operation 2. editing procedures 3. discussion of possible uses of 1/2" video within different areas such as education, psychology, sociology and religion for example. 4. video art including image processing machines such as the Paik-Abe Synthesizer. Workshops are arranged on a demand basis and are designed to relate to the specific interests of those involved. Although borrowing of equipment outside the workshop situation is not guaranteed, all participants use it within the workshop and are encouraged to seek other sources of equipment which could be made available to them. Many groups locally and from around the state have expressed a desire for these workshops, and we have already conducted several (see supporting attachment 1).

The Center is primarily interested in supporting the further development of video as an art form. The Center's definition of a video artist is necessarily a broad one, supportive of the philosophical basis and attitudes of the Center and the newness of the art form. We are not attempting to establish or support a closed group of artists; we do not necessarily seek out or turn down people who are generally accepted as video artists. We often encourage people who are interested in video as an art form but have had little or no experience with video or to whom other production facilities are inaccessible or unacceptable as work areas. The Center will help anyone interested in experimentation with video as an art regardless of credentials as long as the method of operation at the Center is desirable to him. The attitude of the Center is probably more important than the specifics of operation; we try to encourage individual experimentation as well as independence. We make available all necessary equipment to the artist with instruction in their operation and technical assistance if needed. Each person then assumes complete control over all aspects of production, including machine operation.

Request for Assistance
Operating Budget E.T.C. cont.

The Center is now proposing an extension of our production area as a place in which the artist has direct personal control over the tools of his art, the machinery, and in which he has the freedom to determine all aspects of production and to work when and in the manner he chooses. Based on our experience, artists are now demanding this type of facility to supplement the variety already available.

The Center's most basic needs now are in the area of equipment and technical development. Dave Jones has recently joined the Center as resident technician to repair, modify and develop machines as well as participate in workshops. We are also requesting support money for the salary of Shuya Abe, the co-inventor of the Paik-Abe Video Synthesizer. We believe that Shuya's presence would be a valuable asset to all New York State artists. Shuya has expressed the desire to return to the states to further refine and extend the capabilities of the Paik-Abe. The Center plans to purchase the basic color console unit of another Paik-Abe to extend the facilities of the Center and to make available one synthesizer for workshop-performances around the state. If we are to establish other centers like the Experimental Television Center for artists throughout the state, it would be fiscally wise to hire Mr. Abe for this development. Obviously further funding is needed to place other synthesizers in centers around the state if the concept of a center for artists' productions is to spread. A basic unit would cost approximately \$5,000 which does not include external equipment such as cameras or keyers. The funds requested in our Budget cover only the salary for Mr. Abe.

In addition to the technical personnel the Center needs the equipment listed in the budget for the following reasons:

1. as control and monitoring equipment to indicate with precision the technical quality of signals generated by equipment, particularly the Paik-Abe. This has become increasingly important as artists working at the Center demand high quality production capability for distribution of the tapes. Further development of the Paik-Abe and future development of other synthesizers depends on this equipment.
2. to increase the potential of the Paik-Abe. The Synthesizer currently has a black and white keying circuit; color cameras would extend the aesthetic possibilities of the machine.
3. to increase the number of activities possible. Currently we are dependent on the continued optimum functioning of the Panasonic 3130; editing and recording cannot occur at the same time.
4. to encourage the distribution of tapes through the availability of finished productions on cassette.

To explore the usefulness of a center such as the Experimental Television Center as an area for artist experimentation and production with a view toward establishing several such centers around the state, it is important to offer as wide a variety of equipment as possible.

The number of participants for this program is difficult to estimate but between 2 and 3 individual artists per week come to the Center currently to work; some

Request for Assistance
Operating Budget E.T.C. cont.

return and some do not. The size of the audience reached by this type of activity is impossible to estimate but probably very extensive. Since the artist arranges his own distribution of tapes produced at the Center, we have no accurate count of audience size. The revenue generated by this program would depend on arrangements made by the individual for distribution.

For budget see attachment to page 9 A-4.

Request for Assistance

Program: Selective Gray Level Separator
Contact: Dave Jones or Ralph Hocking

A selective gray level separator would permit the division of a black and white video image into 10 distinct levels of gray. The levels of gray are not pre-set and could be adjusted on a sliding scale so that if the image were predominantly of darker or lighter grays, a 10 level division could still be made. The divisions could then be colorized differently with red, green or blue or any mix of these colors on each gray level. As an addition to the Paik-Abe it would offer to the artist a more responsive and precise tool for selective colorization than is now possible. The machine is to be designed and constructed by Dave Jones who recently joined the Center as resident technician.

For budget information see attachment to page 9 A-4

Request for Assistance

Program: Artist in Residence
Contact: Ralph Hocking or Sherry Miller

The Center is proposing with this program an intensification of the Center's current commitment to video artists throughout New York State and our aim of developing the potential of video as an art form primarily through individual experimentation.

We are proposing an expansion of our production area and support for artists who do not have direct financial assistance from galleries or foundations for their video work. Currently our production space is available to interested individuals throughout the state, although we cannot now support the artists directly with stipends or travel money. Those people currently utilizing the Center's resources do not demand a luxurious mode of living, but we feel that the assistance requested for travel and subsistence would enable artists to work at the Center more intensely and for longer periods of time and would enable those people who now find it impossible to work at the Center for financial reasons to pursue their interests in 1/2" video art.

Artists working at the Center demand a hands-on production area where they can directly control all aspects of the taping and use their medium. The Center affords the artist an opportunity for exploration of the possibilities of different equipment, allowing him to make production choices based on a more comprehensive understanding of the capabilities of each machine. The Center presents the artist with an environment which is highly flexible and receptive to his own work habits and patterns; many larger institutions are unable to adapt the routines, necessary to the functioning of a larger organization, to the needs of the individual artist. At the Center each artist has control over the machinery as well as his work schedule. The Center's staff is available for advice and technical assistance, but the artist accepts major responsibility for his production.

Although the artist will own the information produced through this program, the Center would encourage the distribution of tapes through the use of time-base correctors to public broadcasting stations in the state and other not-for-profit groups and institutions, either on a tape exchange basis or for nominal rental fees. If the artist is already receiving financial support for the production of tapes, the Center would be available to help in the production, but would not allocate any of the funds in this program for travel or subsistence.

The Center believes, after having discussed with various artists the types of facilities now available to them for work, that a production area of this kind is essential. It would serve a body of artists not now served by existing 1/2" video production areas.